
Ten Transgender Voice Tips

1. WATCH OUT FOR DRYNESS.

Dry climates, excessive talking, poor intake of water or clear liquids, and too much caffeine (to name a few) will dry out the throat and vocal folds. When the vocal folds become dry, they become stiffer, which makes it much harder to control your pitch. You may experience more pitch and voice breaks when your dehydrated. Depending on body size and the climate where you live, most TG women should consume between two and four liters of water daily. Remember the saying, "pee pale."

2. GET YOUR BEAUTY REST.

Poor sleep is near the top of the list of problems that have a negative impact on the voice. Inadequate sleep results in physical fatigue causing a loss of mental focus on your voice techniques. Common remedies include the use of ear plugs, eye shades and room darkening window coverings. Also avoid caffeine, sugar, and junk food. Practice meditative or breathing relaxation techniques on a regular basis and go to bed when you're tired, don't resist sleep.

3. AVOID YOUR SMOKING AND USE OF ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND MARIJUANA.

Alcohol and most recreational drugs (i.e., cocaine) have a significant drying and irritating effect on the vocal folds. Marijuana and cigarette smoke are highly irritating to the delicate issues (mucosa) of the vocal folds. The heat and dry smoke "burn" the vocal mucosa causing redness, swelling (in some cases) and poor vibration.

4. AVOID THROAT CLEARING.

The vocal folds make contact (vibrate) every time you make a sound. When you clear your throat, the vocal folds "slap" together, which, if done excessively, will irritate your vocal folds. Sip water instead of clearing your throat. Keep a water bottle (near room temperature) with you at all times. If you experience excessive mucous and feel it's impossible to avoid clearing your throat, contact your doctor-there may be medical problems underlying the excessive mucous production.

5. DO YOU SUFFER FROM ACID REFLUX?

Gastroesophageal reflux is a medical problem that requires diagnosis and treatment by your physician. Symptoms of gastric reflux are not always consistent with heart-burn. If you experience excessive mucous, a bitter taste in your mouth, a rough "morning" voice, or frequent belching, you may have acid reflux. Contact your doctor. Acid is a problem for the TG woman's voice because the chronic irritation to the vocal folds from stomach acid will make it very difficult for you to have a "beautiful" feminine voice.

6. AVOID EXCESSIVE LOUD TALKING.

When environmental background noise is high, when we're talking on the telephone, or in the car, there is a natural phenomenon to push the voice (called the Lombard Effect). This vocal strain can create vocal fold irritation and leave you with a rough, husky voice. The solution is to learn techniques for controlling airflow and reducing tension in the neck when you speak in noise.

7. BREATHE RIGHT FOR A BETTER VOICE.

The single best technique you can learn for your voice is abdominal/diaphragmatic breathing. There are many ways to learn these techniques. Learn to speak from your diaphragm.

8. THAT DARN TELEPHONE.

"Yes, sir," may be two of the most annoying words when you're speaking to someone on the telephone. The answer to this problem is to warm-up your voice and "tune" your pitch before you makes calls. Use an upward inflection when you speak. Avoid speaking in a whisper.

9. WHEN YOU'RE SICK (with a cold).

Acute laryngitis occurs when your sick with the flu or a bacterial infection. The "common cold" sometimes affect the voice, and when it does your pitch will drop significantly. Treat your cold, rest your voice, drink plenty of water and warm-up gently. When in doubt REST YOUR VOICE.

10. MEDICATION.

Some medications (like tricyclic antidepressants and decongestants for treating allergies) have a drying effect. The solution is to speak with your doctor about your medications if you are experiencing excessive dryness that does not resolve by increasing your hydration.

Interview with Denae Doyle and Kathy Perez Voice Pathlogiost in CO.

2008 - Denae Doyle ~ @femimage.com